

## HEALTHCARE INTERPRETATIONS TASK FORCE INTERPRETATION

**Number:** HITF.2000.001

**Date:** May 16, 2000

**Code:** NFPA 90A, section 3-4.7; 1999 Edition

**Background:** Effective 1993, NFPA 90A requires maintenance of fire and smoke dampers, once every 4 years. In conducting these tests and maintenance several fire dampers were discovered totally inaccessible due to added utilities.

**Question:** Is it acceptable to exempt a fire damper from the four-year maintenance and test requirement where the physical limitations cause the damper to be inaccessible?

**Answer:** Yes, NFPA 90A: 1-3.2 and NFPA 101(2000 ed): 4.6.3 both contain provisions to allow alternative methods to be considered. As an example of this, the HITF notes the following text that is found in the 2000 edition of NFPA 101.

*4.6.3 Modification of Requirements for Existing Buildings. Where it is evident that a reasonable degree of safety is provided, the requirements for existing buildings shall be permitted to be modified if their application would be impractical in the judgment of the authority having jurisdiction.*